

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10368 011616Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01 TAR-01

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NSAE-00 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 CEA-01

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EGEN, ETRD, IN

SUBJECT: GOI VIEWS ON UNCTAD BOARD MEETING

1. EMBOFFS CALLED ON DR. P. C. ALEXANDER, NEWLY APPOINTED SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, (SECOND HIGHEST CIVIL SERVANT IN MINISTRY). ALEXANDER IS LEAVING IN NEXT FEW DAYS FOR OPENING OF UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD SESSION. ALEXANDER WILL BE ACCCOMPANIED BY PREM KUMAR, JOINT SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE. KUMAR WILL ATTEND ENTIRE BOARD MEETING AS SENIOR GOI OFFICIAL.

2. CONVERSATION CENTERED ON PROBLEMS OF LDC COMMODITY EXPORTS. INDIANS ASSERTED THAT IMPROVEMENT IN LDC TERMS OF TRADE HAD BEEN ON INTERNATIONAL AGENDA FOR 5-10 YEARS WITH NO RESULT. THERE WAS NEED FOR SOME ACTION NOW. UNCTAD "INTEGRATED COMMODITY APPROACH" WAS ONE ANSWER, U.K. HAD OFFERED SUGGESTIONS FOR ANOTHER ANSWER, AND GOI WONDERED WHAT U.S. CONSIDERED BEST SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

3. EMBOFFS, REFERRING TO SECRETARY'S KANSAS CITY AND PARIS SPEECHES,

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EMPHASIZE U.S. AWARENESS OF PROBLEM OF LDC EXPORT EARNINGS (WHILE

NOT ACCEPTING TERMS OF TRADE ARGUMENT SPECIFICALLY). U.S. POSITION WAS TO ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AT FINDING PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS, COVERING A BROAD RANGE OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. U.S. HAD NO SWEEPING ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM AND IN FACT QUESTIONED WHETHER ONE ANSWER COULD BE FOUND WHICH FIT THE CONDITIONS OF ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WHAT WE SOUGHT WAS TO AVOID REPETITION OF RECENT EXPERIENCE OF PROCLAMATION BY LDC MAJORITY OF POLICY GOALS WHICH FUNDAMENTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THIS WOULD RUN THE RISK OF CREATING OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS INSTEAD OF STIMULATING IT.

4. DISCUSSION REVEALED THAT GOI NOT COMMITTED TO MASTER PLAN ALONG THE LINES OF UNCTAD SECRETARIAT RECOMMENDATIONS, BUT RATHER CONSIDERED "INTEGRATED COMMODITY APPROACH" AS A BASKET OF DEVICES TO BE CHOSEN FROM IN DEALING WITH PARTICULAR PROBLEMS. WHILE THIS FLEXIBILITY ON THEIR PART IS FAVORABLE, THEIR ASSERTION THAT UNCTAD PROGRAM MET THIS GOAL COULD COMPLICATE EFFORTS AT KEEPING INTERNATIONAL FOCUS ON A COMMODITY-BY-COMMODITY APPROACH.

5. WE DO NOT EXPECT THAT US DEL TO UNCTAD BOARD MEETING WILL FIND GOI OFFICIALS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. ALEXANDER STRUCK US AS RELATIVELY AUSTERE PERSONALITY NOT FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE ISSUES. KUMAR, WITH WHOM WE HAVE HAD DEALINGS OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME, IS PERSONALLY AFFABLE BUT RIGID WITHIN THE INDIAN MOLD OF THINKING. US DEL WILL FIND THE INDIAN DELEGATION APPROACHABLE BUT EVEN MORE WEDDED TO PECULIARITIES OF INDIAN PRISM THAN OTHER INDIAN UN DELEGATIONS

WHO RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. AS MEA OFFICIAL RECENTLY OBSERVED TO US, UNCTAD IS A MINISTRY OF COMMERCE PRESERVE, AND KUMAR AND HIS ILK WRITE THEIR OWN INSTRUCTIONS.

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